

Golden Research Thoughts  
ELECTIONS IN INDIA AND PUNJAB: A  
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



**Abstract:-**

The present paper focuses on the topic of electoral performance of major political parties in India as well as in Punjab. The data in the article shows that Congress party has been the dominant force in India as well as in Punjab though in the late 20th century and in the beginning of 21st century, the coalition politics is there which affected the one party rule of Congress. The issue of coalition politics in Punjab has also been examined which shows that it is the SAD (Shiromani Akali Dal) which always needs for an ally to successfully contest the elections. The article also looks into and theorise the vote banks in the Punjab politics as well as in Indian politics.

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India, Punjab, Parliamentary elections, Assembly elections, Congress, Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD),  
Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), Coalition Politics, Vote bank.



## INTRODUCTION

Since 1952 till 2009, the fifteen parliamentary elections have been held in India. In the elections whether national or state or local, one thing which is most important for all political parties is to achieve more and more electoral support or vote bank whatever the means are adopted. If we talk about the vote bank of the Congress and the BJP which are the major national political parties, the Congress has the vote-bank of many castes and communities like Rajput, Kayasthas, Vaishayas, Yadavs, Reddies, Marathis, Chamars, Balmikis, Mughals, Ashrafs, Upper caste Christians, Dalit Christians, Jat Sikh, Muslims, Muslims no caste, other Muslim OBCs, other upper caste Muslims, other Scheduled castes, other Scheduled tribes and many other minor castes.

On the other side, the BJP has the vote-bank of particularly of Rajput, Kayasthas, Vaishayas, Yadavs, Bhamins, Bhumiars, Jats, Patels, Kurmis, other peasant OBCs, Other service OBCs, Chamar, other Scheduled castes, other Scheduled tribes. After talking about the vote bank of the Congress and the BJP, we make a shift towards the brief history of Parliamentary elections to find out which political party performed well.

## OBJECTIVE

The paper studies the Parliamentary elections in India since 1951 and Parliamentary and Assembly elections in Punjab since 1967 to see which party has the central power at national and regional level. It will also theorise that is there any change in power at national and regional level and if dose so then why? The causes would be studied.

## Parliamentary Elections in India

The following Table 1 shows the Parliamentary elections since 1952. The first general elections which gave an opportunity to the citizens to elect their own government were held in 1952 in which the Congress swept the poll. The following Table 1 shows that Congress won 362 out of the 489 seats with the 44.9% of votes. In the second general elections, the Congress party again swept the majority by winning 371 seats out of 494 seats with 47.9 per cent of valid votes although it suffered a decline in many states like Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Bihar which later witnessed the emergence of regional parties there. The communalisation of politics had started in which exploitation of masses, on the basis of language, region, caste and other socio-religious factors, was growing.

**Table 1: Parliamentary Elections in India (1952-2009)**

YEAR	TOTAL SEATS	WINNER PARTY AND VOTE PERCENTAGE	SEATS WON
1952	489	CONGRSS(44.98)	362
1957	494	CONGRSS(47.78)	371
1962	494	CONGRSS(44.72)	361
1967	520	CONGRSS(40.78)	283
1971	518	CONGRSS(43.68)	352
1977	542	JANTAPARTY led coalitions (43.66)	299
1980	542	CONGREES(I)(42.69)	351
1984	514	CONGREES(I)(48.01)	411
1989	529	JANTA DAL led NATIONAL FRONT(40.61)	144
1991	521	CONGRESS(35.66)	244
1996	543	JANTA DAL led UNITED FRONT(29)	192
1998	543	BJP led NDA+ (37.21)	254
1999	543	BJP led NDA+ (40.75)	304
2004	543	CONG.ledUPA+(34.53)	222
2009	543	CONG.ledUPA+(37.22)	262

In the next two elections that were held in 1962 and 1967, although the Congress party remained winner but its share went down. It captured 361 seats and 44.7% of votes in 1962 general elections and 283 and 40.7% of votes in the 1967 general elections. This shows that the Congress was losing its control over its voters. In the 1967 elections, the Congress lost its power over more than half state assemblies such as in Punjab, West Bengal, Madras, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Kerala, and Bihar where regional parties got success in forming government at state level. The Chinese aggression of 1962, the deaths of two great politicians Jawaharlal Nehru on 27 May 1964 (first Prime minister of India) and Lal Bahadur Shastari on 11 January 1966 (second prime minister of India), all created the huge vacuum in the power of the Congress party. In the fifth general elections of 1971, the Congress re-emerged as the strong party under the leadership of Indira Gandhi and got 352 seats out of 518 with the 43.68 per cent of valid votes. Instability of the several parties after the 1967 elections forced the people to turn towards the Congress again.

Many significant changes were occurred in the INC such as split in party at state level and at centre level in 1969 and 1977 respectively and emergency rule imposed by the Congress (I) which had been

operation since June 1975 till March 1977 affected the Congress as well as the whole Indian political arena. The sixth general election of 1977 is remembered as the turning point in India's post-independence history because it ended the Congress party's rule after 30 years. This was the end of the Nehru- Indira regime and started era of coalition party and also for the first time Indian Congress party was recognised as the opposition party.

The sixth Parliamentary, which was also the first coalition government at centre, was established under the leadership of Morarji Desai, the leader of Janta party, on 24 March 1977. This was the first non-Congress government at centre in which Janta party was the majority party by capturing 299 seats out of 542 total seats. It got total 43.68 per cent of valid votes whereas the Congress lost the majority by winning only 153 seats. But Janta party could not complete its full term and dissolved on 28 July 1979 because of the power struggle. On the same day, the second coalitional government, under the same Parliamentary election, was established under the leadership of Choudhary Charan Singh of Janta party(S) with the outside support of the Congress (I), but this government also could not complete its full term like the earlier government as the Congress pulled its support from it.

In the seventh Parliamentary election in 1980 the Congress (I) swept the polls once again under the leadership of Indira Gandhi. One significant development of the 1980 elections was that the Congress got a new leader in the form of Sanjay Gandhi. The the Congress party won the eighth Parliamentary election of 1984 with massive victory by achieving 411 out of 508 seats with 48.01 per cent of valid votes due to the unprecedented sympathy wave which was emerged after the death of Indira Gandhi. Since 1989 to 1998, four consecutive parliamentary elections were held. In the parliamentary elections of 1989, the National Front consisting of Janta Dal, Telgu Desham Party, Dravira Muntera Kazagham and Assam Gana Parishad was formed under the leadership of V P Singh. But this Government was dissolved after BJP withdrew its support due to Mandal commission's recommendation on increasing quotas in public sector employment and in university admissions for the OBC communities. The government was formed by Janta Dal under the leadership of Chandar Shekhar on November 10, 1990 with the outside support of the Congress (I). This government was also dissolved before completing its term when the Congress pulled its support because surveillance was conducted on the Congress president Rajiv Gandhi.

There was the huge political turmoil and violence during the 1991 elections in which the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated. The Congress which was the largest party with 232 seats, followed by the BJP with 120 seats and the Janata Dal with 59 seats, formed government under the leadership of P V Narasimha Rao whereas in the 1996, the BJP was the largest party with 161 seats, followed by the Congress with 120 seats, which formed the government under the leadership of Atal Behari Vajpayee. The latter government was short lived for sixteen days only because Atal Behari Vajpayee could not win the confidence motion in Parliamentary and resigned.

In the 1998 general elections, BJP, again, won 180 seats which were more than other parties and considered as the largest political party on the Indian political scene although it needed other parties to remain in power. The BJP got a huge victory in northern and central India, but it was weak in southern and eastern India. The government was formed by BJP led alliance with 253 seats and 37.2 per cent of votes but that government collapsed again in the late 1998 when the AIADMK withdrew support. In the 1999 parliamentary elections, the BJP formed the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) with regional parties, and became the first non-Congress as well as first coalition government to complete its term at the centre under the leadership of Atal Behari Vajpayee. The BJP-led NDA alliance got 304 seats out of 543 with the 44.75 per cent of valid votes. It can be analysed that BJP continually improved its position since 1984 elections in which it secured only 2 seats to 1999 elections in which it was able to secure 182 seats.

The Congress led the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) formed the Government, under prime ministership of Dr. Manmohan Singh in 2004 after the Congress Party emerged as the largest party, by making alliance with many minor parties such as the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhakam (DMK). The Communists, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), and Samajwadi Party (SP) supported the Congress-led government but without joining the alliance. The Congress won only 145 out of the 541 seats and its percentage of the total votes also declined from 28.30 per cent in 1999 to 26.21 per cent in 2004.

The victorious alliance of Congress had won 219 seats with the vote share of 34.5 per cent which was marginally lower than its rival alliance whereas the latter secured 185 seats with the vote share of 34.8 per cent. The reason for the failure of NDA alliance was that it decreased its share of members from 17 parties in 1999 to 12 parties in 2004. The BJP decided to contest by own in Assam, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Haryana and Jharkhand and saw a decline in terms of vote share and seats.

By electing UPA II in the 2009 elections, people gave their mandate on the performance of UPA I in the past years. The Congress led UPA came to power by winning 262 seats with 37.22 per cent of valid votes under the leadership of Dr. Manmohan Singh.

The Congress also took advantage from the regionalization of politics in three manners such as in many states, newly created regional parties have helped the Congress in gaining the electoral support; the good performance of its regional allies like the DMK the NCP, the TNC and finally lost to NDA due to exit of its many members. Whereas the BJP won 116 seats, 22 seats less than in the 2004 elections due to its major defeat in Delhi, Haryana and Uttrakhand. The exit of some parties from NDA like the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Trinamool National Congress (TNC), the AIADMK, and the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) affected the BJP very well. The Communists also faced a major defeat by securing only 24 seats which were lower since 1951 elections.

Thus the data for Parliamentary elections shows that the Congress party has been dominant force in India. It won record ten times [two times under UPA (United Progressive Alliance)] followed by BJP led

NDA( National Democratic Alliance) for two times, Janta Party led coalitions, Janta Dal led National Front and Janta Dal led United Front for one time each. Now we make a shift towards the Punjab politics to see whether Congress party has influence in Punjab or other parties also have some influence there.

### PUNJAB POLITICS

There are three major political parties in Punjab: the Congress, the BJP and the SAD which put their influence on the electorates and swept the majority of the votes. The Punjab vote-bank of the Congress includes the Jat Sikh, OBC Sikh, SC sikh, Other SC, Other Upper Castes, Khatri/Arora Sikh, Brahmins, Rajputs, Hindus, Chamars etc. On the other side BJP has the vote-bank of Brahmins, Vaishya, Khatri/Arora Sikh, Jat Sikh, OBC Sikh, Chamars and other upper caste Hindus. Whereas the SAD has special electoral support in the areas of Jat Sikh, OBC Sikh, Khatri/Arora Sikh, SC sikh, Other SC and Chamars. Now the picture of parliamentary elections in Punjab is being seen to find out whether the Congress has its influence there.

### PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN PUNJAB

Now the picture of parliamentary elections in Punjab is being seen to find out whether the Congress has its influence there.

**Table 2: Parliamentary Elections in Punjab 1967-2009**

YEAR	SEATS	POLL %	WINNER PARTY	VOTE-SHARE	SEATS WON
1967	13	71.1	CONGRSS	37.3	09
1971	13	59.9	CONGRSS	45.9	10
1977	13	70.1	AKALI DAL	42.3	9
1980	13	62.6	CONGRESS	52.4	12
1985	13	67.3	AKALI DAL	37.1	07
1989	13	62.6	AKALI DAL(M)	29.1	06
1992	13	23.9	CONGRESS	49.2	12
1996	13	62.9	AKALI-BSP ALLIANCE	38.5	11(8 AKALI, BSP 03)
1998	13	60.07	AKALI-BJP ALLIANCE	44.5 (32.9+11.6)	11 (08 AKALI AND 03 BJP)
1999	13	56.1	CONGRESS	38.4	08
2004	13	61.1	AKALI-BJP ALLIANCE	44.8(34.3+10.5)	11 (08 AKALI AND 03JP)
2009	13	70	CONGRESS	45.2	08

Since 1967 till 2009, twelve Parliamentary elections have been held in Punjab. Table 2 shows that in the 1967 Parliamentary elections, the Congress won nine out of thirteen seats with 37.3 per cent of total vote-share. It secured the electoral support both from Hindus as well as Sikhs because many Sikh communities traditionally voting for the Congress whereas the Akali Dal got votes particularly from the Sikhs and the Jan Sangh from the Hindus. They could win 22.6 per cent and 12.4 per cent with three and one seat respectively. In the 1971 elections, the Congress won 10 seats with 45.95 per cent of votes. The CPI got 2 seats with 6.22 per cent of votes. The Akali Dal party's percentage increased from 22.6 to 30.8 per cent in comparison to previous election.

In the 1977 Parliamentary elections, the Akali Dal alliance achieved nine seats with the voting percentage of 42.3 per cent of votes whereas the Congress which did not get even a single seat had the vote percentage 35.8 per cent. The Congress lost in elections because of emergency excesses in centre and state. But the Congress won a massive victory in the 1980 elections by winning the twelve out of the thirteen seats and got 52.4 percentages of votes which was much higher than the last elections. The Akali Dal achieved very low margin due to the internal split in party. They achieved only one seat and 23.3 per cent of votes. Janta party got three seats with 9.9 per cent of votes and CPI and CPI (M) got 1.2 and 2.5 percentage of votes respectively.

In the 1985 elections, the Congress won six seats with 41.5 percentage of votes and the Akali Dal got seven seats with 37.17 percentage and formed the government without an alliance whereas the BJP, the CPI, the CPI(M) did not get a single seat. It is right to say that the Akali Dal has the fixed concentration of Sikhs but it always looks for an alliance for gaining electoral support because before the 1966, Sikh constituted about 40 per cent of population of the state and after the 1966, they constituted about 60 per cent of population. But the all Sikh community does not vote for the Akali Dal because of the factionalism among them and moreover some Sikh communities traditionally vote for the Congress. That is why the SAD contested many elections with the support of the Jana Sangh which had the vote-share of the urban Hindus of Punjab, CPI as well as CPM which has the support base of schedule caste.

In the elections of 1989, the Congress got two seats out of thirteen with 26.2 percentages of votes. The Akali Dal(Master) got six seats out of eight seats with 29.1 per cent whereas the Akali Dal (B) and Akali Dal (L), BJP, CPI, CPI (M) did not get any single seat. The Congress won huge victory in Punjab 1992 Parliamentary elections by winning twelve out of thirteen seats with 49.4 percentages of votes. No other party could win even a single seat except BSP which got one seat in those elections. This was because Akali did not contest the elections.

The 1996 elections are considered very important because all the political parties participated in elections after the end of militancy in the state. Parliamentary and assembly elections since 1996 have shown a significant changes in the electoral strategy of the SAD in which issues like economic-political development, cooperative federalism and Hindu-Sikh unity received more importance than ethnic-religious issues, anti-centre and divide and rule. The Congress won only two seats out of thirteen with 35.1 per cent of votes whereas the Akali Dal-BSP alliance got eleven seats with 38.5 per cent of votes polled. In the 1998 election Akali-BJP alliance won by 11 seats with 38.07 per cent of votes polled. The Congress could not achieve a single seat in the 1998 Parliamentary election.

But in the 1999 elections, the Congress again won eight out of eleven seats with 38.4 per cent of polls. On the other side the Akali Dal and the BJP got two out of nine and one out of three seats with 28.5 and 9.1 per cent of votes respectively. There were many reasons which helped the Congress to win the elections like split in Akali, anti-incumbency wave, regain its support base among the scheduled castes, the Hindus, backward castes, unemployed youths, and the lower middle and small Jat-Sikh peasants. The failure of the Akali-BJP combine to go on their promises of the 1997 assembly elections gave an advantage to the Congress.

In the Parliamentary elections 2004, the Congress could retain only two seats with 34.1 per cent polled votes. Other parties could not win a single seat. The cause of loss of the Congress was that people particularly farmers were unhappy with Amrinder Singh's performance in Punjab. Moreover, during these elections, the Sarb Hind Shiromani Akali Dal (SHSAD) and the SAD (Democratic) merged with the official SAD which ultimately gave benefit to the SAD.

In the 2009 elections, the Congress managed to get 45.2 per cent of votes by winning 8 seats. The SAD-BJP combine got 4 out of 10 and 1 out of 3 seats with 33.8 per cent and 10.06 per cent of total votes polled. They got wiped out in the Doaba region which has a large number of scheduled caste populations which generally provided its support to Congress. The Congress recovered its position very well in comparison to 2004 elections as well as it gain the majority of the dalit votes (more than 28 per cent of the state population) because the latter were not happy with the performance of BSP in past years and cast their votes for Congress which has had good support base among them. Moreover the "controlled experiment" carried out by Rahul Gandhi by assigning party tickets to young and inexperienced candidates also proved as a remarkable feature of that election. The picture of parliamentary elections shows that both parties: the Congress and the SAD led coalitions were successful to form equal number of governments in Punjab. Now we make a shift towards the assembly elections in Punjab.

#### ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS IN PUNJAB

After the reorganisation of Punjab in 1966, the first Parliamentary elections and Assembly elections were held in 1967. The Table 3 show first Akali Dal-Jan Sangh-CPI coalition government was formed in 1967 which ended the monopoly of the Congress rule as it was fragmented into two groups; one faction was led by Swaran Singh while the other group was led by Darbara Singh. There was power struggle between them. But Congress was the single largest party by capturing 48 out of 104 seats with 37.6 per cent of votes. The reason of poor performance of the Congress was party factionalism and its opposition of Punjabi Suba state.

**Table 3: Winner Party in Punjab Assembly Elections**

1967	SHIROMANI AKALI DAL led coalition(46/104)
1969	SHIROMANI AKALI DAL led coalitions (60/104)
1972	CONGRESS(66/104)
1977	SHIROMANI AKALI DAL led coalitions (98/117)
1980	CONGRESS(63/117)
1985	SHIROMANI AKALI DAL(73/117)
1992	CONGRESS(87/117)
1997	SHIROMANI AKALI DAL led coalitions(93/117)
2002	CONGRESS(62/117)
2007	SHIROMANI AKALI DAL led coalitions(68/117)
2012	SHIROMANI AKALI DAL led coalitions(68/117)

In the 1969 elections, Akali Dal came up as the single largest party with 29.6 per cent votes and 43 seats while the Congress got 39.2 per cent votes and 38 seats. The Congress party's position was improved when it contested elections in alliance with CPI in the assembly elections of 1972 and won 66 seats and 42.8 per cent votes under the leadership of Zail Singh. Due to the internal emergency of 1977, the Congress party could not achieve majority in that elections. It captured only 17 out of 117 seats with 34.07 per cent of votes. Whereas the Akali Dal, by capturing 58 seats with 31.41 per cent of votes, emerged as the single largest party and Akali-Janta coalition government was formed. Parkash Singh Badal sworn in as the Chief Minister of Punjab.

In 1980s Assembly Elections, the Congress party was again in power in Punjab because Akali Dal had internal strife and was divided into three groups namely Akali Dal(Badal), Akali Dal (Tohra) and Akali Dal (Sant). The Congress captured 63 seats with 48 per cent votes and the Akali Dal captured 37 seats. Darbara Singh was administered oath as the Chief Minister on 7 June 1980 but he quit on 10 October 1983

in the wake of massacre of some innocent bus passengers. President Rule was imposed from 10 Oct. 1983 till 29 Sep. 1985.

In 1985 assembly elections, the Akali Dal achieved landslide victory by capturing 73 out of 117 seats and 38.4 per cent votes and SS Barnala was sworn in as chief minister on 29 September 1985 whereas the Congress could achieve only 32 seats with 37.3 per cent votes. The Congress was the main opposition party at that time. After the dismissal of Barnala government in 1987, Punjab was under the President Rule till Feb 1992 until the elections were held.

In 1992 assembly elections, Akali boycotted the elections. The total turnout of 1992 Assembly Election was 21.58 per cent which was lower than the last four decades in Punjab, but all these issues gave an advantage to the Congress which secured 87 out of 117 seats with 43.8 per cent of votes polled. In these elections, BSP was the main rival party of Congress which did remarkably well by gaining the

electoral support of scheduled caste and got 9 seats with 16.2 per cent of votes. Beant Singh was elected as the chief minister of the state but he was assassinated on 21 August 1995 by militants. After that HS Brar was sworn in as the chief minister of Punjab but he was blamed for defying the party's central leadership and removed from office when he did not recognise Ambika Soni as the acting Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC). Rajinder Kaur Bhathal became CM on 21 November 1996.

The 1997 assembly elections contested by all major parties. The SAD-BJP combine came to power by securing the highest score of 93 seats of 117 members and Parkash Singh Badal was sworn in as chief minister. The Akali Dal (Badal) and the BJP achieved 75 with 35.6 and 18 seats with 8.3 per cent respectively. The AD (B) made tremendous achievement in rural and semi-rural constituencies whereas BJP did well in urban and semi-urban constituencies of the three regions of Punjab. The Congress was the biggest loser and got only 14 out of 117 seats with 26.3 per cent. It did not win a single seat in Majha whereas it won only 9 and 5 seats in Malwa and Doaba region respectively. The BSP also faced a major decline by winning only 1 seat with 7.5 per cent of votes in 1997 as compared to 1992 elections in which it got 9 seats with 16.2 per cent of votes.

The major factor of these changes were the internal divide within the community in terms of religion and caste, main focus of Mayawati on Uttar Pradesh due to gender non-representation in Punjab where women legislators have never reached into double digits, factionalism and not entering into strategic alliances. The victory of Akali Dal in the 1994 Ajnala assembly by-election also became the plus point for it in the post-militancy period.

In the 2002 Assembly elections, the Congress became the ruling party under the leadership of Amarinder Singh by securing 62 seats with 36.51 per cent votes. The Akali Dal got 41 seats with 30.97 per cent votes; the BJP 3 seats with 5.72 per cent votes; The CPI one seat with 1.71 per cent votes; BSP and Panthic Morcha no seat with 5.72 per cent and 4.69 per cent votes respectively. The Congress dominated in both urban as well as rural constituencies and enriched its performance particularly in the Jat-Sikh dominated rural areas of the Majha region.

In terms of religion, it nominated 68 Sikhs (out of which 44 Jat-Sikh), 36 Hindus and one candidate each from the Muslims and Christians communities whereas the Akali Dal nominated 86 Sikh (out of which 53 Jat-Sikh), 03 Hindus and one each to represent the Christians and Muslims. However, when compared to its performance in the 1999 Parliamentary elections in Punjab, the Congress faced a decline in the Malwa and Doaba region by 8 and 4 seats respectively due to the internal strife among senior leaders who wanted maximum allocation of tickets to their favourites. Many of them turned as rebels and harmed the Congress nominees. Moreover, the BSP candidates also spoiled the victory of Congress.

In the 2007 Assembly elections, the SAD-BJP alliance came back to power by winning 68 seats out of 117 seats under the leadership of Parkash Singh Badal. The SAD won 49 out of 93 seats with 37.09 per cent of votes and the BJP got 19 out of 23 seats with 8.2 per cent of votes. The Congress fought elections without an alliance and got 44 out of 116 seats with 40.9 per cent of total votes.

The SAD-BJP gained the support of the farmers in the border regions and assured them to give monetary compensation and proprietary rights. They also received support from Rai Sikhs by assuring to get them the schedule-caste status. Moreover, there was an apparent shift in the urban upper caste Hindu votes from the Congress to the BJP due to the Jat-Sikh image of Amrinder Singh government. After the reorganization of Punjab on 1 November 1966, one prominent feature of Punjab politics has been that the voters have not ever accepted a second consecutive term to the ruling party and power has alternated between the Congress party and the Akali Dal led coalitions one by one. But this trend changed with the 2012 Punjab Assembly elections after the SAD-BJP combine's victory.

In the 2012 elections the SAD-BJP alliance secured 68 seats out of 117. The SAD won 56 seats out of 94 and the BJP got 12 seats out of 23 with 37.7 per cent and 7.1 per cent of total valid votes respectively whereas the Congress managed to win 46 seats of 117 with 40.09 per cent valid votes. The newly formed Sanjha Morcha that is the People's Party of Punjab (PPP), the CPI and the CPI(M) could not get even a single seat but the votes secured by them was about 6.14 per cent. The election results were not insulated from national politics, therefore issues such as corruption, price rise and foreign direct investment played an important role as well. The electorate voted for development and improvements in agriculture by the incumbent government.

The data for the assembly elections shows that the competition was between Congress and the SAD (later SAD-BJP led coalition) in which both parties again won equal number of elections. Thus the elections of assembly as well as parliamentary show that the Congress party and the SAD led coalitions have been dominant forces in Punjab politics. The next segment of this chapter is being find out the SAD led coalitions because in the above assembly as well as parliamentary elections, we have seen that it is the SAD

which always needs for an ally to successfully contest the elections.

### COALITION POLITICS IN PUNJAB

Coalition politics in Punjab follows a history of electoral alliances that is mapped in four patterns: the first is politics of mergers in which INC-SAD merged in 1948 and in 1956; the second phase is reorganisation of Punjab which ended one-party dominance in Punjab and started coalition era; the third is from autonomy to secession in which elections were held to legitimize non-democratic and communal politics in 1985, 1989 and 1992 and the final phase related to resurgence of democracy and punjabi identity which brought major changes in Punjab politics such as the Akali Dal shifted their stance from Sikh identity to Punjabi identity, from the human rights of 'Khalistan' activists to peace, from state autonomy to co-operative federalism. Similarly, the BJP moved from a strong centre to greater autonomy for states. The Congress also apologised for Operation Blue Star and the brutal riots of 1984.

**Table 4: The SAD Alliance in Punjab Parliamentary and Assembly Elections**

YEAR	PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS	ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS
1962		SAD-19,CPI-9
1967		ADS-24,ADM-2,BJS-9,CPI-5,CPM-3,RPI-3,PSP-0
1969		SAD-43,BJS-8,CPI-4,CPM-2, SSP-2,SP-1
1977	AKALI 9, JNP 3 and CPM 1	SAD-58, JP-27,CPM-8, CPI-7
1996	SAD-8,BSP-3	
1997		SAD-75, BJP-18
1998	SAD-8, BJP-3,JD-1	
1999	SAD-2,BJP-1,DBSM-0	
2002		SAD-41,BJP-3,DBSM-0
2004	SAD-8,BJP-3	
2007		SAD-49,BJP-19
2009	SAD-4,BJP-1	
2012		SAD-56,BJP-12

Table 4 shows the SAD alliances in both parliamentary as well as assembly elections in Punjab. In the parliamentary elections of 1996, the SAD-BSP alliance secured highest number of seats. This was a new phenomenon and it adversely affected the performance of Congress party. In this election, BSP could win three seats of the four contested. It was believed that the SAD-BSP alliance would be beneficial for both parties because of the SAD's electoral base in rural jat-Sikh and BSP's in scheduled caste (SC) areas. But the SC section of the Punjab held deep resentment against the wealthy Jat-sikh peasants. This partnership therefore did not go a long way and the SAD was compelled to look for a new ally.

On the other side, the BJP while contesting alone failed to win a single seat out of the six in 1996 elections. It was unable to secure a majority at the centre. It therefore embraced coalition politics based on a 'seat adjustment' process with its allies, where the two parties agree not to contest certain seats against each other. The BJP had experimented with coalition politics in various states and the SAD-BJP alliance in Punjab was one of them. Later the BJP contested all the Parliamentary and assembly elections with Akali Dal (Badal) in Punjab. In 1997 assembly elections, the SAD-BJP alliance won 93 of the 117 seats (the SAD 75, the BJP 18) securing the highest ever tally of seats in the state.

The performance of the SAD-BJP coalition in 1999 Parliamentary elections and in 2002 assembly elections was not good as the combine failed to deliver on the populist promises it made in 1997 assembly elections. In 2007 assembly elections, the SAD-BJP alliance won 67 of the 117 seats (Akali 48, BJP 19) and was able to form government because the SAD encouraged Hindu leadership within its party by giving tickets to seven Hindu candidates. In the 2009 parliamentary election, the SAD-BJP coalition came under scrutiny as the SAD could win only four seats as compared to eight in 2004 Parliamentary elections, while the BJP managed to get only one seat out of four seats as compared to three in 2004 elections. In the 2012 elections, the SAD-BJP alliance again formed the government by securing 68 seats out of 117. The SAD won 56 seats out of 94 and the BJP got 12 seats out of 23.

### CONCLUSION

The Congress party has been dominant force in India. On the other side, in the early years of Punjab Parliamentary and assembly elections, the Congress party performed well under the leadership of resourceful and versatile personalities. But in the post-1966 period, Akali Dal emerged as a powerful political party. The role of Akali Dal in Gurdwara reform movement, Punjabi suba movement, Green Revolution and Anadpur Sahib Resolution helped it to gain vote from the rural Jat Sikh landed peasantry. Moreover its alliance with BJP increased its support base in Punjab.

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